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Grateful for Ramadan, By Rev Fiona Bennett

A few weeks ago I joined with friends for a meal at 9.45pm in AUC to break the daily Ramadan fast. Round the table were people of varied faiths: Muslim, Jewish, Unitarian, Agnostic and Christian. As well as sharing in a beautiful meal, we also shared in a brilliant conversation. We talked about habits of fasting in all our traditions. We talked about life after death. We talked about what inspires us and how God calls us to live.

What we shared in common was a sense of God's presence in our lives and world which called us to live with grace and generosity, justice and peace, faith and love. Our various religious traditions supported us in following this call. My interfaith meal and conversation drew me closer to God and filled my mind and heart with what I can only describe as praise.

When I see the greed, arrogance, hatred and supremacy exhibited in the

name of Christianity there are times when I want to disassociate myself from being Christian, but I know that I am deeply in love, rooted and inspired to follow Jesus. Jesus was a Jew, living under the occupation of the Roman Empire, who showed people a new way of living. A way of healing, health and hope for all the earth. A way to live in tune with God / God's Spirit which brings abundant life for all. It is my growing belief that across cultures, contexts and history, others have also pointed people to living in tune with God / God's Spirit: Buddha, Guru Nanak, Mohammed, Baha'u'llah, to name but a few, have all pointed towards a path of justice, compassion and peace.

In conversations I have had with people of faiths different to my own, where we have got beyond our differences in culture, habit, even faith language, I have repeatedly found great kinship and mutuality. We are impressed and inspired

Getting Involved

Within AUC there are 7 Ministry Teams which are responsible for different areas of Church Life. If you would like to know more or get involved with one of these please e-mail the contact person.

Children & Young People

Kirsty Murray

kirsty.murray@ed.ac.uk

Membership

Alex Peden

a.peden@ed.ac.uk

Our Tribe (LGBTI Ministry)

Nicola Robinson

nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com

Peace & Justice

(Commitment for Life)

Harriet Davidson

harrietdavidson@hotmail.com

Pastoral & Mental Health

Doris Caldwell

hhfcaldwell@gmail.com

Worship & Christian Education

Rev Fiona Bennett

minister.auc@gmail.com

Centre, Property & Finance

Tom Murray

murray.tom@blueyonder.co.uk

If you would like to get involved volunteering within AUC or the local community:

AUC Volunteering

Fiona Somerville

rota.auc@gmail.com

Local Community

Volunteering

Della Morris

dellagreenlanes@gmail.com

< 1 by the same stories of people who live by grace and love. We share the same desires for healing, justice and peace in our lives and world. We yearn for, and are moved by, the presence of God.

I think it is inaccurate and unhelpful to assume that all religions are the same – there is a gift to be found in our differences – but it has been my experience that what unites us is significantly more powerful and important than what separated us.

In the picture of world faiths, I am deeply sorry in particular for the role Christianity has played in forming and perpetuating anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. The attitudes of supremacy, abuse and violence remind me so much more of the Roman Empire (and all empires of power and wealth) which Jesus challenged, rather than the path of love and justice which he showed. I am deeply grateful to God for friends of others faiths and none, whose wisdom and love over years has offered me help, strength, joy, brilliant conversation and beautiful food! Praise God!



On Thursday 29th July, a small, wet band of from AUC headed up to the Bank of Scotland at the Mound to hand in Prudence the Pig, our petition to the bank to begin divesting in fossil fuels. The petition was part of Christian Aid's big shift campaign and we hope, together with churches across the UK, to inspire a change in investment policy.

Here's a picture of Harriet, our ringleader (!), with the staff member who took Prudence and our accompanying letters further on up the bank's chain of command. We brought the staff some Percy Pig to help sweeten the deal!

What Language Would You Like?

You will have seen, I am sure, or perhaps spoken to visitors popping in to Augustine to have a look round. Often we're not quite what they expect. "Are there candles to light?" one Spanish woman asked me recently.

Just this last Sunday morning, as we mingled for after-church coffee, a small group of tourists asked if they could have a look around our building. It was clear that English was not their first language and so, though it was good to be able to hand them a copy of our Church on the Bridge leaflet from the display in the porch, it was even better to be able to say: "We have a number of translations of this leaflet. What language would you like?"

Our leaflet translations, all of them produced by members or friends of our own congregation (and a few coerced relatives!), have turned out to be one of the real success stories of our recently completed heritage project. They really enhance the visits – however brief – of those curious about our building, our tradition and our presence in the city. This particular group was from Austria and the German translation was useful to them.

So, if you see someone taking a look at our building and discover that English is not their first language, do ask if a translation would be helpful and pull one from the packs that you can find in the porch and foyer.

Translations are currently available in Chinese (traditional and simplified), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish and Spanish. If you'd like to offer a further translation do please get in touch with me, either in person or via the church office.

Laurence Wareing



Something To Chew On!

Until recently we always purchased Fairtrade biscuits. With the cost of roof repairs hanging over us, I had changed to buying the cheapest I could find.

We have just began purchasing Fairtrade ones again. The cost is: chocolate chip are 7p each; half chocolate coated are 20p; digestives are 5p each; and large oat or fruit biscuits from Doves Farm are 8p each.

The Church needs to decide what they wish to do. If you have any thoughts you can always pass them on to me after the service one day.

Della Morris



A Walk on the Woods

On Sunday 27th August, after our service has concluded, a group from church will be taking the 41 bus to Cramond for a stroll up the River Almond walkway.

It's about a mile and half walk along the path and at the end there will be afternoon tea at 16 Cammo Grove. Please join us!

Kathleen Ziffo

Pride Edinburgh: Saturday 17th June

It was a glorious day, the sun shone and whistles were blown. We marched under the Our Tribe banner just behind the Bears. The atmosphere was one of celebration. We went from the Parliament to Holyrood Road, through the Cowgate, up Candlemaker Row and on to the University. It felt like there were thousands of us as the march stretched on behind.

The origins of Pride marches harks back to the Stonewall Riots in Greenwich Village, New York in 1969 when drag queens, gay men and lesbians fought back against police raids and harassment. There had been other protests before in San Francisco and Los Angeles, but the Stonewall Riots were a watershed which led to organisations such as the Gay Liberation Front. In the UK the first UK Gay Pride Rally was held on 1st July 1972, chosen as the closest Saturday to the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots three years earlier.

Over the years Pride marches have campaigned for improvements in human rights for LGBTQI people. Pride continues to be a political event and seeks to bring to light inequalities that exist throughout the world.

There are still 70 countries where it is illegal to be LGBTQI and the death penalty still exists in 10 countries. Until there are full human rights for LGBTQI people throughout the world there will still be a need to march every summer.



Along with many other community organisations and 'gay-friendly' businesses we staffed a stall for AUC at the community fair that followed the march in Teviot House. We chatted to folk as they passed and handed out flyers about the Pride service and Our Tribe. All in all a good day was had.

Lewis Reay

our tribe




At June's Our Tribe we celebrated Pride with prayers, songs and communion. These mini rainbow flags represent our prayers for the LGBTIQI community in Scotland and across the world.

Our Tribe isn't meeting over summer, so make sure we have your email address to get in touch when we resume in the autumn. Pop us an email at nicola.a.robinson1@gmail.com and we'll see you are kept up to speed!

Nicola Robinson

Paradise Green Productions

We are excited to welcome back Paradise Green Productions for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival again this year.



As we head into August, the church building will be transformed. Expect to find us on raked seating if you are joining us over the festival period.

Why not come along to Augustine during the Fringe to see a show? You could be at Godland for the Goblins, A Case of You: The Music of Joni Mitchell, Godspell, Made in Dagenham: The Musical, the Last Days of Judas Iscariot or Terry Pratchett's Wyrld Sisters, to name but a few!

More information and tickets online are available from www.edfringe.com, or from the Paradise Green box office at AUC (in person or 0131 510 0022)

Some Hellos and Goodbye for Nows

Augustine was sad to say goodbye to Ian, one of our wonderful staff members when he headed off and into retirement at the end of June. The photo to the right is his card. A new member of the caretaking team is now on board, do say hello to Bernard if you see him!



Lastly, Seeds is thrilled to report to those of you that don't know already that church member, Our Tribe Convener and Edinburgh Churches Together Communications Officer, Nicola Robinson, will be standing in as our Administrator when Rachel heads off on her maternity leave. We'll miss Rachel greatly but are lucky to have Nicola on board! If you don't know Nicola, she is pictured on p.4 attending Pride.



Justice & Peace —Pilgrimage Walks



Following on from Matt Baines's report from our Eco-Congregation Annual Meeting in Seeds last month, Kathleen Ziffo explains the 'Re-discovery' and development of Pilgrimage Routes in Scotland, by groups such as the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum.

After the Reformation, pilgrimages were abandoned by Protestants as there were seen to be too many excesses associated with such religious journeyings! Nowadays however, Pilgrimages are being reclaimed as moral and (very often Christian) spiritual, cultural and ecological experiences.

One just has to consider the quarter of a million people annually now walking the 'Camino de Santiago' to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, where reputedly the Apostle St James is buried. An increase in this sort of pilgrimage and ecological tourism can also be a helpful boost to struggling rural communities, when hospitality can be experienced (money is spent locally on B&Bs, meals, local transport, and local cultural and Christian information is produced and supplied, etc.)

The linking of places of spiritual significance, a 'at-oneness' with nature while walking to experience a time 'set apart' for contemplation and quiet, or for meeting ordinary but enlightening people, unexpected weather and topography, interesting shrines, bothans and shielings, ancient standing stones and refreshing wells – this is what a Pilgrimage is about.

A number of old routes across Scotland are now being re-established. These include the routes from Iona to St Andrew's; the Deeside Way, the Whithorn Way from Paisley to the Isle of Whithorn; the recently opened Fife Pilgrim Way and a new Forth to Farne Way.

In considering these, and thinking about what is nearer to us in Edinburgh, Elizabeth Bay, Karen Bass, Matt Baines, Fiona and I have variously had ideas about how we might link our environment, cultural and Christian heritage around our urban AUC – we need to put the ideas into a melting pot! What can



we come up with? Those who know more of the history and culture of the old town and south side of Edinburgh might be able to help us 'map' a few walks in central Edinburgh for instance.

What are the important ancient Christian sites round AUC? Where is wild life being supported and flourishing? What can we learn from the 'ancients' who walked the miles around EH1? Secret gardens, places of quiet reflection, historic wells and tiny chapels – these are the sorts of things we'd like to learn about. We hope we can reach out and encourage more people to explore this aspect of our lives.

It is said that the aim of 'pilgrimages' is to re-energise mentally, physically and spiritually. The journey is as important as the destination - and in every ending, every arrival, there is a new beginning.



Lindisfarne Away Day/Pilgrimage

Sunday 13th August 2017



Our 3 churches (Greyfriars, St Columba's by the Castle and Augustine) have a, now well established, Away Day Trip/Pilgrimage annually one Sunday in August – this year on 13th August. As we did a couple of years ago, we have arranged to go to Lindisfarne - the Holy Island off the north Northumberland coast.

We aim to leave George IV Bridge at about 10am by coach(es) and to reach the mainland coast across from Holy Island by about 11.30am.

Rev David Paton-Williams from St C's will lead those who wish to make the crossing by foot over the sand and receding tide to Lindisfarne, while the coaches take the rest of us to the coach park on the island!



People normally take a picnic with them, though there are 1 or 2 wee shops, tea rooms, a pub and the Post Office, I believe, sells wonderful locally-caught crab in sandwiches!

Because the walkers might take a while to cross, it has been decided that our service on the beach (opposite St Mary the Virgin Church of England) will be in the afternoon, at about 3.30pm. We can also use this lovely Parish church if the weather is terrible.

Between our arrival and the worship service, time is your own to explore the island with its beaches and walks; the village has a Mead centre in addition to a few shops. The ruined Priory and the harbour area are worth visiting too. At the Lindisfarne Visitor Centre you can

learn about the Lindisfarne Gospels, written in honour of God and St Cuthbert, see the facsimile or interactive display; hear about the Vikings and learn of island life. The Castle is in the process of restoration this year though and will not be open to the public.

We have use of the URC's St Cuthbert's Centre from Noon to 3pm for people to pop in and have a time of sitting quietly or to obtain a cup of tea or coffee - some might wish to eat their

sandwiches there or shelter from any poor weather. However, the small building only houses 45 at a time.

We will leave before the tide returns and should be back in Edinburgh by 6pm.

The cost of the visit is dependent on numbers attending and the number of coaches hired, but should be about £16-18 per adult; £8 for retired, unwaged and children (3-16). Children under 3 are free but seats need to be allocated on the coach(es) for them too. We also need to know numbers who intend to make the crossing over the sand and water so that they can liaise with David about appropriate attire, etc.

Definite numbers need to be known before the day of the visit and all money should be received by Kathleen Ziffo at Augustine. I will let you know the actual cost per person once the number of coaches and the number of people attending is determined.

Kathleen Ziffo



R.E.H Tea Room Needs You!

We have run the tea room at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital on the third Sunday in the month for a number of years. We are now down to 4 of us and so need more volunteers.

This would mean helping perhaps 3 or 4 times a year on a Sunday afternoon. I would hate to stop this vital service due to lack of interest from volunteers. Please see me if you might be able to help at all.

Della Morris



Helplines:

Trauma Counselling Line Scotland: 08088 02 04 06 (M-W 5-8pm; Th-F 9am-2pm; 24/7 answerphone; www.survivorscotland.org.uk)

LGBT Support: 0300 123 2523

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

Silver Line: 0800 4 70 80 90

Rape Crisis: 8088 010 302

Breathing Space: 0800 838587

Edinburgh Crisis Centre: 0808 8010414

Pastoral Care

*“...bearing with one another in love...”
(Ephesians 4:2)*

At AUC, we aim to provide a web of care which promotes growth in relationships and good spiritual/mental health, through both informal and formal contacts.

If you are looking for individual support please contact a minister:

Rev Fiona Bennett (minister.auc@gmail.com)

Rev Maxwell Reay (revmaxwell.auc@gmail.com)

As well as offering 1:1 support in the setting which is most appropriate for you, they can link you with the pastoral visiting team which offers regular support to the housebound.

Prayer requests are welcomed. They can be shared with the ministers either directly or via Rachel in the Church Office.

If you would like support due to a mental health issue, you would be welcome at the Mental Health Drop-in, held weekly on Tuesdays 10.30am-12pm in the Sanctuary (followed by a Time for Reflection). This is hosted by AUC and run by the NHS Lothian Spiritual Care team. Further details are available on the 'Tenants and Room Users' noticeboard, or speak to Maxwell.

(Full contact details for Fiona/Maxwell and the office are on the cover of Seeds)

Church Discussion Meeting: Israel/Palestine

At our June Church Discussion Meeting we were considering Israel and Palestine. We watched a video from Christian Aid and held a discussion afterwards, We ended our session by writing out little prayers, which had been requested by the organisation Kairos Britain, as part of their marking of Pentecost. We've taken elements of those prayers and blended them together here:

There is hope still.

We pray for the little children of different communities, that we may see in them hope for the future.

Lord God, open the hearts of all to acknowledge their common ground and to encourage us to see 'the enemy' as potential friends.

Help us to understand the actions and path which might allow even the smallest steps towards reconciliation.

May God's spirit fan the flames of peace and healing in individuals, projects and communities.

In the rest of the world, may God's spirit fan the flames of peace and healing in individuals, communities and governments.

Grant in all nations a new spirit of cooperation, that justice may prevail on all the earth.

We pray that the UK and other powers who agreed to the Balfour Declaration comply with their own statements that the rights of Palestinians would be upheld.

We acknowledge every small sign of hope.

Amen

Inclusive Christian Theology

When?

10th, 17th and 24th Sept
and 1st Oct 2017

5-6.30pm

What?

- What is Salvation in a multi faith world?
- How can we listen and give authority to a book as violent as the Bible?
- What relevance has the crucifixion for today?

These four sessions open up conversations to explore the different ways these questions (and others) could be addressed within a framework of Christian Theology which is inclusive of all and looks for diversity of opinion and experience.

If you would like to participate please email Fiona by Sunday 3rd Sep. Spaces are limited to a small group discussion.

Minister.auc@gmail.com

Crossing the Divide by Matt Baines

The title caught my attention immediately. *"Christian group wants to keep mentally ill out of its 'sacred' services."** Bold words playing right into my interests in inclusion and exclusion.

Concern and bitter disappointment rose. Christians are lobbying the Australian Government to amend discrimination laws to permit churches to restrict people with mental illnesses from leading a family worship service. Their concern is the potential for disruption to worship posed by someone who might involuntarily call out profanities.

My heart moves towards those at risk of exclusion. A comment reads: "Isolating those who struggle with isolation is incredibly cruel"; I want to add my own voice, but the next comment stops me short: "They can't be true Christians." Is this helping?!

Taking a second look, a more complex situation unfolds beyond the sensationalist headline. Issues of welcoming everyone and providing a safe space for all deserve a more nuanced discussion than the anger and indignation of an internet comments column. A case study in exclusion becomes a reflection on the need for respectful and constructive dialogue. How do we move forward in creative ways with those we fundamentally disagree with?

In recent weeks the Scottish Episcopal Church voted in favour of gay marriage. A huge step forward for equal rights, but not the end of the journey. As I write, a global coalition of Anglicans representing more traditional views is preparing to appoint a missional bishop to provide pastoral care for those in Scotland who disagree with the outcome of the decision. The other voice doesn't go away because we rewrite the rules. Rather, we are faced with the renewed challenge of how to live with our opposite number.

This may be the defining challenge facing our deeply divided world. Though the threats of climate change, increasing global tensions, and terrorism dominate the headlines, our inability to discuss these topics without resorting to insults, rhetoric, or internet induced rage, threatens our very capacity to tackle any of these issues as. Consider the resurgence of the far-right. While the history of recent decades seems to paint a picture of an increasingly progressive, liberal

and accepting society, we haven't necessarily brought those who disagree with us along for the ride. The past two years of politics alone have demonstrated this with a huge rubber-band style snapback in the opposite direction.

So what do we do with the voice of the Other that won't go away? Ignore it? Run from it? Shout across the internet from our polemical trenches? In an age where it is possible to deliver an 140-character ultimatum to the US President, the knee-jerk reaction often carries the day and frames the discussion. Yet we live on the verge of multiple tipping points of disastrous proportions, on national, international, global and ecological fronts. Crises that cry out not just for well considered and creative responses, but for respondents ready and willing to cross polarised minefields.

Where do we start?

I value my friend Conner greatly. His perspective is one I seek out often. His opinions are... not ones I always agree with. We fundamentally disagree on more than a few core issues and discussion is something we often find challenging. But we find a way. How? "There has to be a desire to remain in relationship", Conner explains. I agree. Whether interpersonally or internationally, the desire to engage with the Other in positive and constructive ways is essential. At the very least, we need an openness, a curiosity as to why they see the world in the ways they do, and why it matters to them. This move towards open and compassionate dialogue is an adventure in discovering the Other, in recognising that it is possible to be mistaken when you are right, and in exploring a more generous world beyond polemics: a world full of possibilities, where together we can reimagine the future; a future where we find the voices we wanted to disappear are the ones we cannot live without.

In the words of the Islamic poet Rūmī:

"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing. There is a field. I'll meet you there"

The discussion continues on my blog at www.facebook.com/wellofechoes

*You can view the original article at <http://ab.co/2twVX4T>

June: Pentecost



Through June, Junior Church have been considering the Mystery of Pentecost. We heard the story and then shared a Feast afterwards, made up of each bringing our favourite snacks, and talking about them. Some quotes from the kids playing with the materials afterwards were:

"Let's build a city. It's a City of Justice....and let's build a temple. Because you can't have a city without a temple....."

As we head into summer, we'll be considering David and Rahab, but to find our more you'll just have to come along and join us. We wish everyone a lovely summer!

Junior Church welcomes families in all their wonderful diversity. We do our best to offer a safe and nurturing space for families and their friends. We have varied activities each week, from storytelling, to crafts, games and video making. We have a crèche for little ones and baby changing facilities are available. We use materials to appeal to children's different learning styles using the PowerXpress curriculum, and also use Godly Play (www.godlyplay.org.uk).

Children at Augustine are welcome to receive communion and to fully participate in the life of the church. Children regularly help during services, and sometimes serve communion to the wider church community.

Please feel free to contact us using the details on p.2 of Seeds if you have any questions.



Happy Birthday

Violet is 8 on 13th July

Katherine is 12 on 26th July

Calendar

AUC Worship Services at 11am on Sundays at AUC, George IV Bridge. (All events at AUC, unless otherwise stated. Later updates on website/notice sheet)

July		Season of Pentecost
Sunday 2nd	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
	12.45pm	Church Business Meeting
Monday 3rd	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC
Sunday 9th	11am	Morning Worship, led by Laurence Wareing
Sunday 16th	11am	Morning Worship, led by Nicola Robinson, with Laurence Wareing preaching
Sunday 23rd	11am	Morning Worship, led by Jonathon Bay, with Mike Holroyd preaching
Tuesday 25th	7.30-9pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Thursday 27th	1.30-3pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation
Sunday 30th	11am	Morning Worship
August		Season of the Festival
Sunday 6th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
Monday 7th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC
Sunday 13th	NO MORNING WORSHIP AT AUGUSTINE	
	10am-6pm	Lindisfarne Trip: Annual The Local Churches Pilgrimage BOOKING ESSENTIAL (see p.7)
Sunday 20th	11am	Morning Worship with Communion, with Linda Harrison preaching
Sunday 27th	11am	Morning Worship
	12.30pm	Walk (see p.)
September		Season of Creationtide
Sunday 3rd	11am	Morning Worship with Communion
	12.45pm	Church Business Meeting
Monday 4th	2pm	Women's Union at Saughtonhall URC
Sunday 10th	11am	Morning Worship, Noisy Church led by Rev Fiona Bennett, with Rev David Pickering, Moderator of the Synod of Scotland preaching
	3-5pm	Service for those affected by suicide
	6.30-8pm	Progressive Theology Course Session 1 (see p.9)

Please note the deadline for material for the Sept issue is Friday 25th August.

You can send your material to newsletter.auc@gmail.com or via the church office.

DISCLAIMER: Although we check all information in the newsletter, as ever with these things we can give no warranties as to accuracy or relevance and encourage active checking before you make any decisions. The views expressed in our newsletter are those of the individual contributor, they are not necessarily those of AUC or the editor.